

Echo the Bat

In the upper elevations of Arizona, there was a forest of tall Ponderosa pine trees. The forest was covered with snow and the evenings were quiet as animals slept through the cold winter nights. When spring arrived, the snow melted and a colony of female bats made their home in a hollow pine tree to raise their young.

Unlike birds that hatch from eggs, bats are mammals. The mother bats will give birth to their young and feed them mother's milk. Because their pups are too young to fly and catch their food, mother bats care for their pups during the first month.

As the warm days of spring led to summer, a baby bat was born. He had a tiny, furry body with awkward wings. His mother held him close to her and wrapped him in her wings. All day long, she could hear his chirping cry echo through the hollow tree. From that day on, his mother called him "Echo."



Echo spent his days in the hollow tree upside down, holding on to his mother, who hung by her feet....

Echo's wings are bigger than his whole body. They are made up of arms and long finger bones covered with a stretchy skin. His thumb is a claw that is used to cling to his mother or to the inside of the tree.

Just when the sun set, Echo's mother called to him, "Hold on tight! I am taking you with me so I can catch some insects for breakfast. Flying insects are food for us bats."

Echo grabbed hold of his mother with his clawed thumbs and away they went. They flew up and down and all around the forest....

One evening, Mother Bat had to go out and find insects without Echo.

"You have grown too big for me to carry," said Mother Bat. "Stay here with the other bat pups. I will be home soon...."



Story and Illustrations by Ginger Butcher

Reading Mini-Assessment Grade 3
LA.3.1.6.3 and LA.3.1.6.9 Form A



Before she left, Mother Bat warned Echo and the other pups, “Be careful not to fall because there are owls and snakes that would like to have you for their dinner!”

Echo and the other bats held on tight to the inside of the tree. They were very scared of the owls and snakes they heard about. They huddled close together to stay warm and began calling for their mothers.

“There she is!” cried Echo. The mother bats returned and greeted their pups. Echo called to his mother, “Over here!” But she flew over to another bat pup.

“Mother, over here!” cried Echo again. But Mother Bat flew to another bat pup sniffing and licking its fur. “Oh, why doesn’t she hear me,” Echo thought to himself.

Finally Mother Bat flew to Echo and started licking his fur. “Why didn’t you hear me?” Echo asked his mother.

“Well, Echo,” replied Mother Bat, “Since it is so dark in our hollow tree and there are so many pups, I had to use another sense to find you. I could tell that you are my baby because of your scent. So you see, Echo, I had to get close enough to the bat pups to smell their scents....”

[Soon Echo and the other bat pups were one month old and they learned how to fly.]

All the young bats were happy to be flying. They flew around the lake and through the pine trees.

Echo was getting tired and hungry. It takes a lot of energy for a bat to fly.

“Follow me!” Echo’s mother called out. “Let’s find some yummy beetles for breakfast.”

Echo could see with his eyes and could hear the many sounds of the forest with his ears. But this was not enough to catch those tiny bugs after the sun went down.

“Mother!” called Echo. “How do you catch those bugs? It is too dark and I can’t see them.”

“You must use your ears,” Mother Bat replied.

“Ears?” asked Echo. “How can I see with my ears?”

“We use our eyes to *passively* sense our surroundings,” explained Mother Bat. “But we have another sense which allows us to *actively* sense our surroundings. You can actively call out a high-pitched sound and listen for its echo. The sound will bounce off objects in the forest like trees and tiny insects.”

Reading Mini-Assessment Grade 3
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“Using your big ears,” she told Echo, “listen for the sound to return. Depending on how long the sound takes to return and from which direction the sound returns, you can locate objects to avoid, like trees, and objects for food, like tiny insects. This is called *echolocation*.”



Echo tried calling out an ultrasonic chirp. He was amazed at a new world that was not visible to him before. After locating an insect, Echo flew toward it and caught it in his mouth. He then pushed the bug into his mouth with his tail.

“Remember to chew quickly,” alerted Mother Bat. “You must begin making chirps again right away, so you don’t run into a tree.”

“This is very hard to do,” thought Echo. “This echolocation must take a lot of practice.”

“We bats have remarkable senses,” Mother Bat continued.

[Mother Bat explained more about echolocation.]

As Echo listened to his mother talk, he felt proud to be a bat.

Reading Mini-Assessment Grade 3
LA.3.1.6.3 and LA.3.1.6.9 Form A

Name _____ **Date** _____

Directions: Read the passage and choose the correct answer.

1. Read this sentence from the story.

His thumb is a claw that is used to cling to his mother or to the inside of the tree.

What does the word *cling* mean?

- A. hang on
- B. jump on
- C. point at
- D. poke at

2. Read this sentence from the story.

“Remember to chew quickly,” alerted Mother Bat.

What does the word *alerted* mean in this sentence?

- A. agreed
- B. decided
- C. joked
- D. warned

3. Read this sentence from the story.

“We bats have remarkable senses,” Mother Bat continued.

As used in this sentence, the word *remarkable* means

- A. honest.
- B. real.
- C. special.
- D. strong.

<p style="text-align: center;">Reading Mini-Assessment Grade 3 LA.3.1.6.3 and LA.3.1.6.9 Form A</p>

4. Read this sentence from the story.

Depending on how long the sound takes to return and from which direction the sound returns, you can locate objects to avoid, like trees, and objects for food, like tiny insects.

What does the word *locate* mean?

- A. find
- B. observe
- C. remember
- D. study

5. Read this sentence from the story.

The forest was covered with snow and the evenings were quiet as animals slept through the cold winter nights.

Which sentence uses the word *covered* as it is used in the sentence above?

- A. The fields were covered with rows of corn.
- B. The robbery was covered on the evening news.
- C. We covered over two miles on our hike yesterday.
- D. Last year our science book covered the solar system.

6. Read this sentence from the story.

But she flew over to another bat pup.

Which sentence uses the word *flew* as it is used in the sentence above?

- A. Many flags flew over our town on July 4th.
- B. A helicopter flew the travelers over the islands.
- C. Time flew quickly because we were having fun.
- D. The runners flew by us as they raced toward the finish line.

Reading Mini-Assessment Grade 3
LA.3.1.6.3 and LA.3.1.6.9 Form A

7. Read this sentence from the story.

They huddled close together to stay warm and began calling for their mothers.

Which word is closest in meaning to the word *huddled* as used in this sentence?

- A. collected
- B. crowded
- C. grouped
- D. snuggled

8. Read this sentence from the story.

Before she left, Mother Bat warned Echo and the other pups, “Be careful not to fall because there are owls and snakes that would like to have you for their dinner!”

What is the meaning of the word *fall* as it is used in the sentence above?

- A. arrive
- B. autumn
- C. happen
- D. tumble

Reading Mini-Assessment Grade 3
LA.3.1.6.3 and LA.3.1.6.9 Form A

ANSWER KEY

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Item #	Answer	Bench- mark
1.	A	163
2.	D	163
3.	C	163
4.	A	163
5.	A	169
6.	B	169
7.	D	169 <small>(166)</small>
8.	D	169

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